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STATE FOR EUR/ERA --DILLE AND EUR/AGS - SAINT-ANDRE

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SUBJECT: DEMARCHE TO AUSTRIA: APRIL 23-24 GAERC AND EU
CUBA POLICY

REF: A. STATE 51262
[1](#)B. STATE 52623

Classified By: Economic Political Counselor Gregory E. Phillips. Reason: 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (SBU) EconPolCouns delivered ref (a) points on the GAERC agenda and ref (b) points on EU Cuba policy to Austrian MFA European Correspondent Andreas Riecken on April 20.

[1](#)2. (C) Riecken made the following substantive comments:

-- Central Asia: There will be no decisions on Central Asia at this GAERC. Instead, this agenda item foresees a general discussion to "orient" the German presidency, preparatory to finalizing a strategy toward Central Asia in June. There will not be an special discussion on Uzbekistan (unless a minister chooses to raise it).

-- Western Balkans: There will be no discussion of the Balkans at the April GAERC, Riecken said. It had been on the agenda, but the feeling in the EU was that there were really no new developments since the discussion of the issue at the Gymnich, so it was no longer an agenda item.

-- Middle East: This will come up as a luncheon topic. On contacts with the Palestinian government, Riecken said most EU member states are of the view that they can meet non-Hamas ministers. "No one" will meet with Hamas members, he added. On Iran, there are no decisions or council conclusions. However, the Presidency wants to have a discussion not only of the nuclear issue, but of the whole range of relations with Iran, because this did not take place at the Gymnich. (Riecken said the Gymnich dropped the Iran discussion because it would have been "inopportune" while the Iranians were still holding the British seamen.) Lebanon is not on the agenda, but there are "hints" that the French might raise it. Algeria is not on the agenda.

-- Africa: All the topics we mention are on the agenda, he said.

-- WTO/Doha Round: The French routinely ask that WTO be on the GAERC agendas as a matter of course, but there is unlikely to be any real discussion, Riecken said.

[1](#)3. (C) Riecken said Italy had proposed a luncheon discussion of the death penalty. The Italians were pressing for action in the UN General Assembly to call for a moratorium on the death penalty. Riecken said that all EU member states oppose the death penalty, but the Austrians are among those who would rather take a more "realistic" approach by avoiding yet another failure (this would be the third) in the General Assembly.
KILNER